

From the Foundation

by Martha Hardwick Hofmeister



Foundation Funds Five Chapter Community Outreach Grants

Federal Bar Association members across the country are committed to community service and outreach. The Foundation of the Federal Bar Association is honored to support such worthy activities through our Chapter Community Outreach Grant program, which provides funding to support community service projects and pro bono activities that involve FBA chapter participation.

This spring, the Foundation approved five grants totaling \$16,000. Congratulations to the following FBA chapters:

Orlando (Florida) Chapter **\$3,000 for Civil Pro Se Project**

The Middle District of Florida, where the Orlando Chapter is located, had the second highest number of pro se filings nationwide in FY 2013. This statistic is likely due to the fact that Coleman Federal Prison, the largest in the nation, is in the district. Thus, all pro se prisoner cases are handled by the Middle District. The Chapter Community Outreach Grant will help fund a series of four training sessions on issues that volunteer attorneys are likely to encounter in the pro se cases that they accept from the Civil Pro Se Project.

\$2,000 for Voting Rights Symposium

The Orlando Chapter is hosting a Voting Rights Symposium to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. Both the Orlando Chapter and members from sister chapters will benefit from the symposium by increasing awareness of voting rights issues, particularly in Florida, where recent redistricting efforts have disproportionately affected minority voters. Through a series of breakout sessions led by federal judges and distinguished speakers, symposium attendees will brainstorm on potential legislation that might be enacted at the federal level to address the *Shelby County v. Holder* holding.

Oklahoma City Chapter **\$5,000 for Mentorship Program**

During 2013, the Oklahoma City Chapter became aware of the need for mentors for young lawyers as they begin the practice of law, particularly in the federal sector. Ethics counsel for the Oklahoma Bar Association informed the chapter that lawyers who do not have experienced attorneys to guide them encounter issues, including bar complaints from clients, within the first five years of practice. With this problem in mind, a committee of the chapter spent the last 15 months strategizing, researching, and organizing a mentorship program to serve FBA practitioners who have zero to five years experience.

Eastern District of New York Chapter **\$3,000 for an Event Honoring Female Veterans**

The EDNY Chapter plans to host an event honoring female veterans of military service. It will include an educational component highlighting legal and social resources that are available to assist female veterans with the unique challenges that they face.

Dayton (Ohio) Chapter **\$3,000 for a Clemency Project Gala**

The Dayton Young Lawyers Division is hosting a gala to raise awareness of volunteer opportunities with Clemency Project. The project is sponsored by Federal Public Defenders, the American Civil Liberties Union, Families Against Mandatory Minimums, the American Bar Association, and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. The project provides pro bono assistance to nonviolent federal prisoners who would have likely received a shorter sentence under current laws. The Dayton YLD decided on this project because it values the mission, the project is desperately in need of volunteers, and the YLD hopes to raise awareness for the project and influence members of the local bar to volunteer their efforts in the future.

Community Outreach Grants Background

The Foundation's Chapter Community Outreach Grants program was started in 2011 to support community service or outreach projects that involve FBA chapter participation. Since that time, the Foundation has provided nearly \$85,000 in grant funding to FBA chapters in 15 states and the District of Columbia.

Funded projects must address the need for legal services in the community or fall under any component of the Foundation's mission, which is to:

- Promote and support legal research and education
- Advance the science of jurisprudence
- Facilitate the administration of justice
- Foster improvements in the practice of federal law

The next deadline for FBA chapters to submit grant applications is June 15 for funding decisions that will be announced Aug. 31. The Foundation encourages all FBA chapters to consider submitting an application for these funds. More information, the grant application, and guidelines are available at www.fedbar.org/Foundation/Chapter-Grant-Program. ☺